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General Assembly Budget Ticker

The Revenue Forecast Committee recently released some promising numbers that Indiana's economy may be on a slow recovery.

For the first six months of the fiscal year 2003:

- Total revenues are up around 8 percent over the same period of FY02
- Sales tax is up around 1.5 percent over the same period of FY02
- Individual income tax is up around 3 percent over the same period of FY02

Look here weekly for future updates as the budget debate wages on in the General Assembly.

ROBERT GARTON

THIS WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE

Week 1

January 9, 2003

Dear Friends,

This legislative session promises to be more challenging than sessions of recent years. Legislators have much to consider including education issues, economic and technological development, and extreme fiscal constraints.

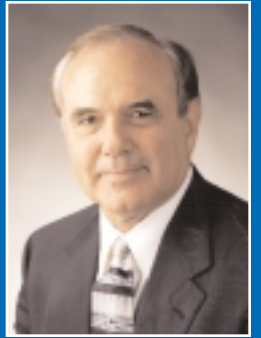
I encourage you to read over my newly redesigned weekly legislative update. I have added a section on the inside that will give you a quick update on upcoming events in the General assembly and on the back will be a weekly update on how the budget debate is progressing.

This session will be a long one, but I am confident that my colleagues and I will be able to come together and do what is best for each of you and our state, as a whole.

Throughout the 2003 session, please do not hesitate to contact me regarding concerns you have.

Warmest regards,

Robert Garton
State Senator



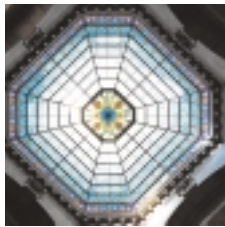
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THIS WEEK IN THE INDIANA LEGISLATURE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY GETS OFF TO RUNNING START

The General Assembly marked the beginning of its 113th session on Tuesday. This session will test each of us in making hard decisions about how to repair our slow economy and growing budget deficit.

The budget deficit is the result of a financial slowdown after the booming economy of the 1990s, which had allowed our state to spend more on new programs and services. When this economic growth ended, the new spending in Indiana did not. This leaves the state in a tight spot to construct a budget that will be fiscally responsible yet provide Hoosiers with continued programs and services.

I am committed to making sure Hoosier families come first as budget

negotiations proceed. We need to do what is best for the state now as well as plan for a secure future. All efforts must be made to balance the budget and work toward comprehensive economic development that will stimulate our economy.



Indiana has lost approximately 140,000 jobs in the last two years. Hardworking Hoosier families deserve better. We need to provide high-skilled jobs so that our talented

college graduates have an incentive to stay in our state. We also must attract and maintain business in our state by keeping the financial incentives that were put in place in past sessions and develop other options for new growth. Citizens deserve a state that offers a stable economy in which to raise our families.

The public education system will remain a high priority for the legislature this session. Education in Indiana has been teetering at the bottom of the nation for the past couple of years. Despite recent improvements in test scores, there is plenty of room for further changes and advancement. We need to work harder to provide our children with the best education possible and to provide opportunities for them to excel.

Another important discussion this session will be focused on health care and the rising cost of Medicaid services. Nationwide health care costs have risen by around 10 percent and Medicaid costs have risen over 8 percent. Many Hoosiers are concerned about how they will be able to afford health care in the future. We, as legislators, will work hard in examining the services the state provides and evaluating how to provide the best health care for Hoosier seniors and families.

I look forward to working hard this session and bringing your concerns and viewpoints to my fellow colleagues.

Important Dates in the General Assembly

January 14: Governor O'Bannon's State of the State

January 22: Filing deadline for Senate Bills

February 27: The last day for committee reports to be filed on Senate Bills

March 3: Second reading deadline for all Senate Bills

March 4: Third reading deadline for all Senate Bills